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Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY SITUATION REPORT #3
(As of 1200 EST, 6 March 1984)

Iraqi Counter-Attack Against Manjoon Islands

The Iraqi Defense Minister announced this morning that Iraqi forces had launched a major offensive to recapture the two Manjoon Islands, in the southern marsh areas, which the Iranians took last week. Iranian press reports claim the attack by Iraqi infiltrators was repulsed and the enemy suffered heavy losses. []

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The Iraqis probably hope to drive the enemy from the islands before the Iranians have completed building their pontoon bridge. This bridge will link the more northern of the two islands with Iranian forces on the eastern edge of the marshes in Iran and provide them with a forward base to attack Iraqi positions to the south or threaten the Baghdad to Al Basrah road to the west. []

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The Iraqis will find it difficult to drive the Iranians off the more northern of the two islands. The Iranian infantry probably is well dug and troops armed with RPG-7 antitank rockets and antitank mines are likely to take a heavy toll on the advancing Iraqi tanks. An attack over the 3/4 mile long by 25 foot wide causeway between the southern and northern islands could easily become stalled after the lead elements are knocked out and block following units from advancing. To reduce losses, the Iraqis will have to concentrate preparatory air and artillery firepower on the Iranian positions in the hope that this, along with chemical weapons, will weaken the Iranian infantry. They also might try to use a heliborne commando force to seize the islands in a night attack. Iraqi commanders may be increasingly reluctant to put any aircraft in the area, however, because the islands will be within range of one of the new operational Iranian HAWK missile sites. []

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This report was prepared by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis of the Directorate of Intelligence. Questions may be directed to the Chief, Iran-Iraq Branch, Persian Gulf Division []

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Meanwhile, the Iraqis are continuing to strengthen their defenses in the south in anticipation of the major Iranian offensive against Al Basrah.

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Casualties and Morale

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[redacted] the Iraqis are apparently deliberately shelling civilian areas of the city in retaliation for Iraqi attacks on Iranian cities. Although civilian losses from shrapnel wounds have been high and some food supplies are limited, civilian morale was good and the people seemed genuinely happy with recent Iraqi military successes. [redacted]

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Reports from the Interests Section in Baghdad indicate that Iraq is intensifying its efforts to callup manpower into reserve units for duty in rear areas and to free regular army troops for combat. The Iraqi activities fall short of a full mobilization, but authorities are making extra efforts to locate draft dodgers and tighten draft exemptions. [redacted]

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Iraqi Reaction to US Condemnation of Chemical Warfare

Baghdad reacted strongly to US condemnation of Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iran. An Iraqi spokesman denounced the US statement as fallacious and hypocritical. Although angered by Washington's criticism, Baghdad almost certainly will continue to use chemical agents. [redacted]


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Charter and Insurance Rates Increase in the Gulf

Iraq's announcement of attacks on tankers near Khark Island and a more recent attack on merchant shipping near Bandar-e Khomeini have led to increases in both charter rates for tankers loading in the Gulf and war risk insurance premiums for oil tankers and cargoes coming out of Khark. The effect of these increases on the price competitiveness of Gulf crudes and export activity at Khark will be slight. They will add \$.60 at most to the delivery cost of a barrel of Iranian crude. 

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Charter rates for shipments from Khark to Western Europe have risen since 29 February by 65 percent from a depressed \$.66 per barrel to \$1.09 per barrel, according to the international shipping press. Rates out of Arab ports on the Gulf also have risen, but only by 32 percent. 

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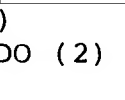


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- 1 - NIO/GPF
- 1 - NIO/NESA
- 1 - DDO/NE, 
- 1 - DDO/NE, 
- 1 - DDO/NE, 
- 1 - SDO (2)
- 1 - DDS&T/DO (2)
- 1 - SCIO
- 1 - C/CSG
- 1 - C/ILS
- 1 - C/ISS
- 1 - C/PDB
- 1 - C/NID
- 1 - CRES

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1 - C/OPSCTR
1 - DC/OPSCTR
1 - D/CPAS
1 - DD/CPAS
4 - CPAS/CMD/CB
1 - OGI/IIC/TAB
1 - C/PES
1 - D/NESA
1 - NESA/PPS - 6G02 Hqs
4 - DDI/NESA/PG
ORIG:C/NESA/PG/I:

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